Claims

1. An optical network arranged in a manner such that in use at least one management function in the optical network is being effected utilising standard TCP/IP communication protocols.

2. A network as claimed in claim 1, wherein the optical network is arranged in a manner such that, in use, the management function is being effected on a computer located within a network element of the optical network.

3. A network as claimed in claims 1 or 2, wherein the management function comprises the distribution of one or more of the group of alarm reports, audit logs, alarm logs, and status reports.

4. A network as claimed in any one of the preceding claims, wherein the optical network is arranged in a manner such that, in use, the management function is being effected via e-mail messages transmitted using the standard TCP/IP protocols.

5. A network as claimed in any one of the preceding claims, wherein the optical network may be arranged in a manner such that, in use, the management function is being effected via an HTTP server incorporated in the network element and accessible via a conventional web browser.

6. A network as claimed in any one of the preceding claims, wherein the network element comprises a network node or an in-line amplifier.

7. A method of managing an optical network, the method comprising the step of effecting at least one management function of the optical network utilising standard TCP/IP communications protocols.

8. A method as claimed in claim 7, wherein the management function is being effected on a computer located within a network element of the optical network.

9. A method as claimed in claims 7 or 8, wherein the management function comprises the distribution of one or more of the group of alarm reports, audit logs, alarm logs, and status reports.

10. A method as claimed in any one of claims 7 to 9, wherein the management function is being effected via e-mail messages transmitted using standard TCP/IP protocols.

11. A method as claimed in any one of claims 7 to 10, wherein the management function is being effected via an HTTP server incorporated in the network element and accessible via a conventional web browser.

12. A method as claimed in any one of claims 7 to 11, wherein the network element may comprise a network node or an in-line amplifier.

13. A network element for use in an optical network, the network element comprising means for, in use, communicating using standard TCP/IP protocols to effect at least one management function in relation to the network element.

14. A network element as claimed in claim 13, wherein the means for communicating comprises an SMTP server application.

15. A network element as claimed in claims 13 or 14, wherein the means for communicating may comprise an HTTP server application.

16. A network element as claimed in any one of claims 13 to 15, wherein the management function comprises the distribution of one or more of the group of alarm reports, audit logs, alarm logs, and status reports.

17. A network element as claimed in any one of claims 13 to 16, wherein the network element is in the form of a network node or an in-line amplifier.